

Rupa Shenoy, *Minnesota Public Radio*

U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi was in St. Paul today to tour Union Depot.

The historic depot recently won a \$35 million federal stimulus grant to help it become a modern transportation center.

Pelosi was accompanied by fellow Democratic Reps. Jim Oberstar and Betty McCollum.

Oberstar says the Depot project's working budget is nearly \$238 million. Officials have gathered most of that money through federal sources. Minnesota contributed half-a-million dollars.

Oberstar says the project is still short at least a million dollars.

"There is still a gap -- the state of Minnesota does not have a statewide rail plan," Oberstar said. The governor needs to be participatory in developing a state wide rail plan."

A spokesman for Republican Governor Tim Pawlenty did not immediately return calls seeking comment.

Pelosi says the shovel-ready project is a model for the Midwest.

"This is the future. This is a lot of money but a small price to pay for taking this region into the future," she said.

The depot is set to open in September 2012. The facility is intended to serve as a hub for Amtrak, buses, and the central corridor light rail.